So the worship of the nats lived on, and with the advance of
795 civilization the spirit dances became elaborate, for though the belief
535 was primitive, the people were no longer so. The dances benefited from the developments that had taken place in Burmese music which, as we have seen, flourished under the patronage of the Pagan kings. New spirits were added, and they were usually those of heroic princes. The dancers were now many, for the mediums turned themselves into dancing and music mistresses. The chief medium of each spirit dressed herself in the special dress of the spirit, but the junior mediums, who were equivalent to the chorus of an English revue, were in the dress of Burmese princesses. It is interesting to note the
[292] origin of this dress. The mediums realized the necessity of dressing
[565] themselves in fine raiment, but as everybody wore clothes of bright colours, the only solution of the problem was to don the dress of the court and official class, which the commoners were forbidden to
[536] wear by law, except during feasts and dances. When drama proper came into being, the hero and the heroine dressed themselves in the court dress, even when they were representing common characters.

### 3. Miracles and Interludes

175 After the fall of the kingdom of Pagan in A.D. 1257, Burma was
369 the scene of fierce civil wars, but the trouble was mainly in the
● 726 capitals; in the villages and small towns life went on in its joyous
779 way. Religion continued to spread in spite of the fact that the throne
538 of Pagan was no longer in existence to support it. Learning began to reach the remotest parts of the country, carried far and near by monks. To escape from the aimless strife of the civil wars, men turned towards literature. Money was lacking to compose poems in brick as had been done at Pagan, and men now expressed their love for the religion and their love for the beautiful in writing. The new literature further educated the people and made even stronger the already strong religious fervour. As a result, at village feasts and on days of public rejoicing, the people turned towards their religion for amusement and entertainment. So pageants depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha and from his Birth Stories came into being.

796 Pageants were given on ordinary carts that were in use for all
541 kinds of transport and which are still in use in backward parts of the
493 country at the present day. Each cart carried a group of (amateur) actors standing still and representing a set scene. Originally, no doubt, there were only a few carts representing scenes from different stories. Later, a pageant came to consist of many carts and many

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4



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ness. Can there be a more valuable knowledge for anyone than this?

In many ways she will act for her husband with vigour and address, and she is not afraid of appearing in his name or her own in law courts, for instance, or in transacting certain kinds of business. She knows that she can do certain business as well as or better than her husband, and she does it. There is nothing more remarkable than the way in which she makes a division of these matters in which she can act for herself, and those in which, if she act at all, it is for her husband.

Thus, as I have said, she will, as regards her own property or her own business, act freely in her own name, and will also frequently act for her husband too. They will both sign deeds, borrow money on joint security, lend money repayable to them jointly. But in public affairs she will never allow her name to appear at all. Not that she does not take a keen interest in such things. She lives in no world apart; all that affects her husband interests her as keenly as it does him. She lives in a world of men and women, and her knowledge of public affairs, and her desire and powers of influencing them, is great. But she learnt long ago that her best way is to act through and by her husband, and that his strength and his name are her bucklers in the fight. Thus women are never openly concerned in any political matters. How strong their feeling is can better be illustrated by a story than in any other way.

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In 1889 I was stationed far away on the north-west frontier of Burma, in charge of some four thousand square miles of territory which had been

16:Fielding Hall G-S (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4



newly incorporated. I went up there with the first column that ever penetrated that country, and I remained there when, after the partial pacification of the district, the main body of the troops were withdrawn. It was a fairly exciting place to live in. To say nothing of the fever which swept down men in batches, and the trans-frontier people who were always peeping over to watch a good opportunity for a raid, my own charge simply swarmed with armed men, who seemed to rise out of the very ground—so hard was it to follow their movements—attack anywhere they saw fit, and disappear as suddenly. There was, of course, a considerable force of troops and police to suppress these insurgents, but the whole country was so roadless, so unexplored, such a tangled labyrinth of hill and forest, dotted with sparse villages, that it was often quite impossible to trace the bands who committed these attacks; and to the sick and weary pursuers it sometimes seemed as if we should never restore peace to the country.

The villages were arranged in groups, and over each group there was a headman with certain powers and certain duties, the principal of the latter being to keep his people quiet, and, if possible, protect them from insurgents.

Now, it happened that among these headmen was one named Saw Ka, who had been a free-lance in his day, but whose services were now enlisted on the side of order—or, at least, we hoped so. He was a fighting-man, and rather fond of that sort of exercise; so that I was not much surprised one day when I got a letter from him to say that his villagers

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4



175 religion which actuated the kings to build temples on such a scale. In
[779] 1300 A.D. the power of the Pagán kingdom had spent itself, in a great degree owing, as the Burmans believe, to the drain of the temple-building. But the force of the religion was unabated. Burma fell a prey to Shan invaders, who snatched the dominion for nearly two hundred years but failed to consolidate

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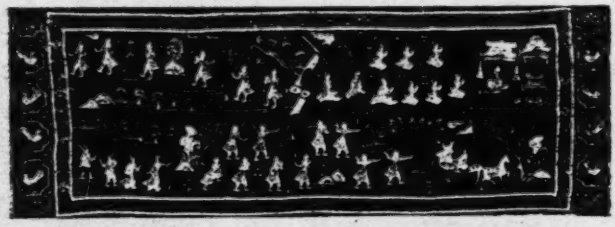

9. BURMAN GENERAL GOING OUT TO WAR (APPLIQUE WORK).

it, splitting up into principalities like those of their native hills. The weakness of Burma allowed the Mun power to develop. The sixteenth century saw the rise of Pegu and the establishment of a shifting empire over Burma. Exhausted by wars, Pegu in turn declined and lay at the mercy of Siam (*Yódayá*) when Paung (*Tanng-ngu*) came to the rescue. In the seventeenth century the Paung-Peguan dynasty brought the Mun empire to its zenith, from which it waned in the eighteenth. Towards the middle of the latter century the Burmans under Aláung Payá rose against the Mun garrisons, overthrew Pegu and finally established the empire of Burma. Arakán was incorporated; Siam was subjugated and made tributary for a time. The empire directed its ambition to the west. Manipúr was overrun and the Arakanese pretensions in Chittagong were revived, which produced friction with the British power in India. Burman dominion had been a career of unbroken conquest in the memory of the then generation; the nation believed itself invincible. In the elation of their prowess at home they

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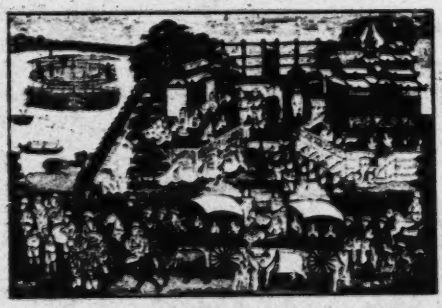

10. BURMAN PICTURE OF THE FALL OF MANDALAY.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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370. HEADMAN MUSTERING HIS VILLAGERS.

## CHAPTER VII

### *POLITICAL*

WITH alien races planted on his soil and the watchful rivalry of the Taláing to contend with, the Burman had hourly need to guard his camp. Besides the enemies without, and their potential allies within, brigand bands of his own race had to be held in check. The chronic wars of Burman and Taláing (Mun), who were separated by no natural frontier, have left their record in the stockaded villages between Prome and Mimbu, a no-man's-land in which soldiers were impressed to fight, now on this side, now on that, and where, on being disbanded, they continued the plunder by which the armies subsisted in war. The traditions of brigandage and the exploits of noted leaders are remembered, and such enterprises are still a resort of the *vauriens* of a village or country-side when they perceive their chance—*damyá-taik sâdya!* These brigands (*damyá*, gang-robbers, dacoits) lay their plans to surprise a village while the men are away at work or endeavour to create a panic by a night attack and so obtain their booty without risk of an encounter. An occasional gang might

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371. BURMAN OUTPOST STOCKADE.